

**MONDAY MORNING GROUP OF WESTERN RIVERSIDE COUNTY
ANNUAL ADVOCACY TRIP – WASHINGTON, DC
APRIL 9 – 11, 2024**

WATER SUPPLY RESILIENCY

ISSUE: The current water system in the West was designed for an era with fewer demands and a vastly different climate. Increased temperatures, less reliable snowpack, and unpredictable storms have proved the need for modernizing the West’s water supply system to create long-term resiliency. Significant investments in water capture, storage, and conveyance are needed to manage during years of drought and years when water is abundant to ensure the West’s future economic and environmental stability.

ACTION: The Monday Morning Group strongly urges Congress to continue making water supply a top priority and to continue making significant investments to modernize California’s water supply system. Effectively capturing, storing, and moving water where it is most necessary will improve resiliency regardless of extreme and increasingly unreliable weather conditions. One specific action Congress could take to achieve these objectives would be to reauthorize the three primary Bureau of Reclamation Western water grant programs created by the 2016 WIIN Act. Those programs are:

- WIIN Water Storage Grant Program
- WIIN Competitive Title XVI Program
- WIIN Desalination Program.

Even though the authorization for these programs has expired, Congress continues to fund them on an annual basis. However, each program needs to be updated and increased authorization levels.

BACKGROUND: According to a study released in February 2022 by the University of California, Los Angeles, California is experiencing its worst 22-year period of drought in over 1,200 years. Many areas of Southern California experienced significant reductions in water deliveries because of the immense strain on the system, resulting from only a few years in a row of severe drought conditions. From December 2022 through March 2023, the West, particularly California, received record-level rain and snowpack, demonstrating the significant and unpredictable climate swings that make it extremely difficult to manage water effectively.

While drought and flooding are not new phenomena to the West, climate change has resulted in extended dry, hot periods, reduced snowpacks, and heavier rainfall in shorter periods. These conditions make managing the prolonged drought with existing infrastructure impossible. The arid West will always rely on some water supply from wetter regions. But rain and snow have become less predictable and frequent, making California’s current water infrastructure and management system ineffective. When water is abundant to the point of flooding the existing system is overwhelmed and runoff cannot be captured resulting in millions of acre-feet lost to the ocean. Substantial investment is needed to upgrade the West’s water supply system to meet the present and future needs of more than 60 million people.

According to water managers, significant investments are needed in the following categories to provide truly effective water management that will ensure a reliable water supply for future generations:

- **Conveyance:** Water managers must be able to move water where needed, especially during significant rainfall events.
- **Storage:** Water managers need to be able to store water both above and below ground which can then be relied on during extended dry periods.
- **Local and regional water infrastructure:**
 - a. Recycled water, ocean and brackish desalination, regional conveyance, stormwater capture, and local storage projects are all important projects that assist in more effectively managing water, depending on local conditions.
 - b. By aiding in investment in local systems, the federal government can help ensure both resiliency and affordability when adapting to these unpredictable climactic changes.

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Water is critical to all aspects of existence and must continue to be a top priority. Continued decreases in water supplies without effective water management strategies will have catastrophic effects on the environment, economy, housing development, and quality of life for all people in the West—including those most disadvantaged—and is an issue deserving continued action.